

DWELLER IN HALLWAY CHAINS EFFECTS TO FLOOR IN VAIN ATTEMPT TO PREVENT HIS EVICTION.



JOSEPH CUSTER AND THE OLD HOUSE IN WHICH HE LIVED AND CONDUCTED A SHOE SHOP ON NORTH FOURTEENTH STREET.

—By a Republic Photographer.

For two days deputy constables labored in a dingy hallway at No. 1009 North Fourteenth street before they were able to evict Joseph Custer, an eccentric character who made his home there for two years, because of the fact that all of his effects were chained to the floor. They finally succeeded and now Custer's belongings are on the sidewalk, the landlord is in possession and the stubborn tenant is looking for a new home.

It cost more to put him out than a year's rent would amount to. The amount Custer owed was \$4, but the costs will be four or five times that amount. Custer, when served with the summons, declared he would do bodily harm to the constables if they attempted to evict him, but this threat he evidently feared to carry out.

Instead he dug up part of the wall and used the brick as a barricade to the front door, the only entrance to the place. Then he used some heavy screening, which he has had for years and constructed rough cage, but substantial enough to give the minions of the law much trouble before they could effect an opening.

BESIEGED HIS LITTLE FORT.
The old cobbler remained at his post as

long as the hastily constructed cage would withstand the onslaught of the constables, but when they finally succeeded in forcing their way into the place his spirit fell and he surrendered the fort to the enemy.

But the troubles of the constables only began when they entered the place. Every article of furniture, such as it was, was securely fastened to the wall or floor, the cage had been simply, though securely put together, and as the representatives of the law tolled and persisted to undo what the old cobbler had done, Custer stood without and chuckled to himself.

Custer's work bench and stove, bed and other articles were "nailed down," so to speak, and no constables ever experienced such difficulty in evicting a person as did the deputies who put old Custer on the sidewalk. The eviction began Wednesday and was not completed until yesterday afternoon.

STOVE FASTENED TO BUILDING.
The most difficult piece of houseware to be removed was the stove which Custer used both for heating and cooking purposes.

The affair was of very small size, but Custer had it securely chained and bolted to the floor, and for stovepipe he used gaspipe, which he ran from the stove to the top of the second story. The pipe, like the stove, was chained and bolted. It took almost four hours to remove the stove.

Now Custer has no home, his belongings are piled up on the sidewalk in front of the old building, and he is scouring the city in quest of another place where he can again take up the life of a hermit, as he is called by those who know him.

Custer is perhaps the most eccentric character St. Louis ever had. He has lived all over the city and has been evicted many times. While a cobbler by trade, he has always an idea that he was an inventor.

While in a sense a genius, none of his "inventions" ever proved a success.

SLEEPS IN SWINGING BED.
Besides casing himself, Custer always suspended his bed from the ceiling, and at night when he retired he would lower his "bunk," and after getting into it, pull it from the floor. Then he felt safe from burglars or other unwelcome visitors.

Years ago Custer established himself at Twenty-first and Wash street, and his unique home at that place is yet remembered. At that time Custer constructed a home of glass. He gathered glass from various parts of the city and built the house.

His was one of the curiosities of the city. Old iron of all descriptions, and tools, weapons and everything was collected by him. He often tried some invention, but never succeeded.

There are two linemen now in San Francisco who have been through all of the rigors of the mountain work and who were forced to leave it on account of the terrible strain, although they were paid high wages for the work they accomplished by the telephone company. One of them, Foreman Simon Mann, still with the Pacific States Telephone Company, constructed the seven-strand aluminum cable line over the mountains three years ago and had a wealth of experience and adventures during his work at that time. Another man, who has recently returned from the district, and who is now in the employ of the Southern Pacific Company, is James Gagan, who is now assisting in the building of new telephone lines on the outskirts of the city. For two years Gagan worked on the line up to the mountains in the high altitudes, and had experiences that he will carry with him to the grave. He endured every hardship that men in the business can suffer, but never lost his nerve or failed in an undertaking.

DANGER OF SNOW BLINDNESS.
Gagan was obliged to wear smoked glasses almost continually. He never suffered from snow blindness, however, as did some of his companions, and seemed to be impervious to any kind of danger, calloused to any risk and wholly indifferent to fatigue. While some of the men who even had worn glasses were suffering for weeks at a time in dark rooms with the sharp excruciating pains which come from snow blindness, Gagan was able to be at his work and apparently was not affected by the dazzling glare from the surface of the snow.

He wore the nine-foot American snowshoes, which weigh about a pound and a half apiece and was sometimes obliged for weeks at a time to make the entire circuit of his fourteen miles of territory daily. On May 4 of last year there was a terrible snow storm in the mountains, which leveled every wire to the ground and had men out in the mountains for weeks reconstructing and repairing. Gagan said that for days men had to traverse the damp snow on their snowshoes, their progress being so impeded by the wetness and dampness of the clinging snow that after a few hours of tramping they would be well nigh exhausted.

If snow was so damp as to make progress slow it was often necessary for the linemen to camp out overnight with the merest pretense of a camp, and with one blanket for a whole month Gagan made the entire circuit of his fourteen miles of territory on foot daily in the heavy snows repairing wires and inspecting.

The rocks and sides of the mountains were covered with snow, and every step meant a fall of hundreds of feet to the yawning, rocky and snow-covered death. The prospect of such a fall, not in and was knocked off from the top of poles to the ground below, nothing but the thick covering of snow saving him from serious injury. In one week he had a few hours of poles three times, and never thought of enough consequence to report it to his company or say anything about it.

He frequently received shocks from "hot" wires retaining 2,000 volts, but he never received serious injury. He was a remarkable case, for he seemed to bear a over a sixty-five-foot embankment, but luckily fell on a pile of snow about ten feet deep, and suffered nothing but an inconvenient lack of breath for a few moments. Time and again, when he saw small snow-slides coming, he jumped behind abutting rocks and was saved from being swept into the canyon below.

If hunters and mischievous boys only knew what a crime they were committing when they shot the glass insulators off telephone and telegraph wires they would never again be guilty of such a folly. Many a some thoughtless and ignorant person shooting an insulator off from a pole cross arm, or knocking a man from a pole, or precipitating a veritable madam of high-pressure currents through a linemen's body, and he will fall over into the network of wires and burn until his body is rescued by his comrades.

This is one of the greatest terrors of the linemen—the unexpected encountering of a hot leak, which may smelt their lives out in the twinkling of an eye. So serious a matter has this become in the East that strict laws have been passed hearing on daily in Chicago and New York and other Eastern cities. Linemen are held in this manner as the result of some person's in-lining to prove his marksmanship on an insulator. Whether a man's life is endangered or not, it takes a great deal of the work done by a bullet or some other trouble and considerable expense to repair broken an insulator. The pity of it is that in most cases the damage is done innocently by the offender, who does not know what consequences he may entail.

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HEROIC WORK OF THE SIERRA TELEPHONE LINEMEN.

Brave Repair Men of Pacific Company Have to Undergo the Rigors of Weather in High Altitudes—Muscle, Nerve and a Thorough Knowledge of the Business Is Required.

San Francisco, March 21.—Probably one of the most dangerous occupations in the world is that of a telegraph lineman. Every day as he fearlessly goes about his work in the repair departments of the telegraph, railroad and telephone companies, the linemen take his life in his hands, never certain that he will complete his day's work or that he will return to his home at night. There are men who work daily within a few inches of a "hot" wire or strand carrying from 50,000 to 100,000 volts, and to work among wires that carry 5,000 to 10,000 volts is a common thing. The touch of one of the latter wires or to make a circuit through an unknown leak may mean instant death, although not necessarily so. Recently at Niles, a lineman received through his body the larger share of a voltage of 40,000 and lived to tell all about it; but his case was one in a million.

STRENUOUS REPAIR WORK.
The work of any lineman is hazardous in the extreme, but the work done in the winter time in the mountains is the most dangerous of all. For three years the Pacific States Telephone Company has been working over the Sierra Nevada mountains and in their maintenance and repairing from day to day in the zero atmosphere, the linemen have had to undergo the rigors of weather

in the high altitudes, have suffered from snow blindness, have been partially frozen at times, have lost their way in the fierce snowstorms and almost perished from starvation and have never heard of again. Accidents of the latter nature have been of quite frequent occurrence, and there is absolutely no way of forecasting them or of evading them when they come.

The telephone repair men are subjected to even greater dangers than the telegraph linemen, for the reason that the latter follow the railroads and much of the way have the protection of snow-sheds. The telephone linemen, however, are out in the exposed open much of the time on the sheer sides of the mountains, where a snow-slide may sweep them out of existence at any moment. Aside from that, they have to traverse snow from two to fourteen feet deep on nine foot snowshoes, and if a snowshoe breaks on a hidden projection of rock or a snag, the linemen, far from being helped by men or help of any kind, may meet a miserable and lonely death. Starvation then awaits him even if he does not freeze to death meantime or is not smothered while floundering in the snow with his heavy equipment.

WHAT IS REQUIRED.
Muscle, nerve and a thorough knowledge of the business, besides an accurate knowledge of the mountains and their dangers, is required of the linemen doing this class of

BUSY MEN WRITE BUSINESS LETTERS

Dr. W. A. Lewin, Lewin Bldg., St. Louis:

My Dear Doctor—I was treated by you for a very aggravated case of rupture more than twelve years ago. Any one who has not been afflicted with such disease cannot possibly imagine the terrible suffering one has to endure. Several physicians advised an operation as the only cure, which I positively refused, owing to the danger and bad results therefrom. As fortune would have it, I happened to meet a friend who had been cured by you, who promised you very highly and advised me to consult you, which I did in September, 1900, and two months later you discharged me, perfectly cured. Your treatment was painless and did not detain me from my business, and I must say that your cure of my case seems now most wonderful to me. You did not require any money in advance; in fact, you refused to accept the same, preferring to wait until I was cured. Ever since you discharged me I have been actively engaged in my lively business, and I assure you I had almost forgotten that I ever was ruptured until I happened to meet you last week. You have my permission to publish this letter if you see fit, and I sincerely hope it will be the means of bringing some poor sufferer to you for treatment.

Allow me to express my appreciation of your kind, courteous and gentlemanly treatment and my deepest gratitude.

Sincerely yours, WILLIAM PAHLMANN,
St. Louis, March 12, 1902. 2503-2505 Easton avenue.

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